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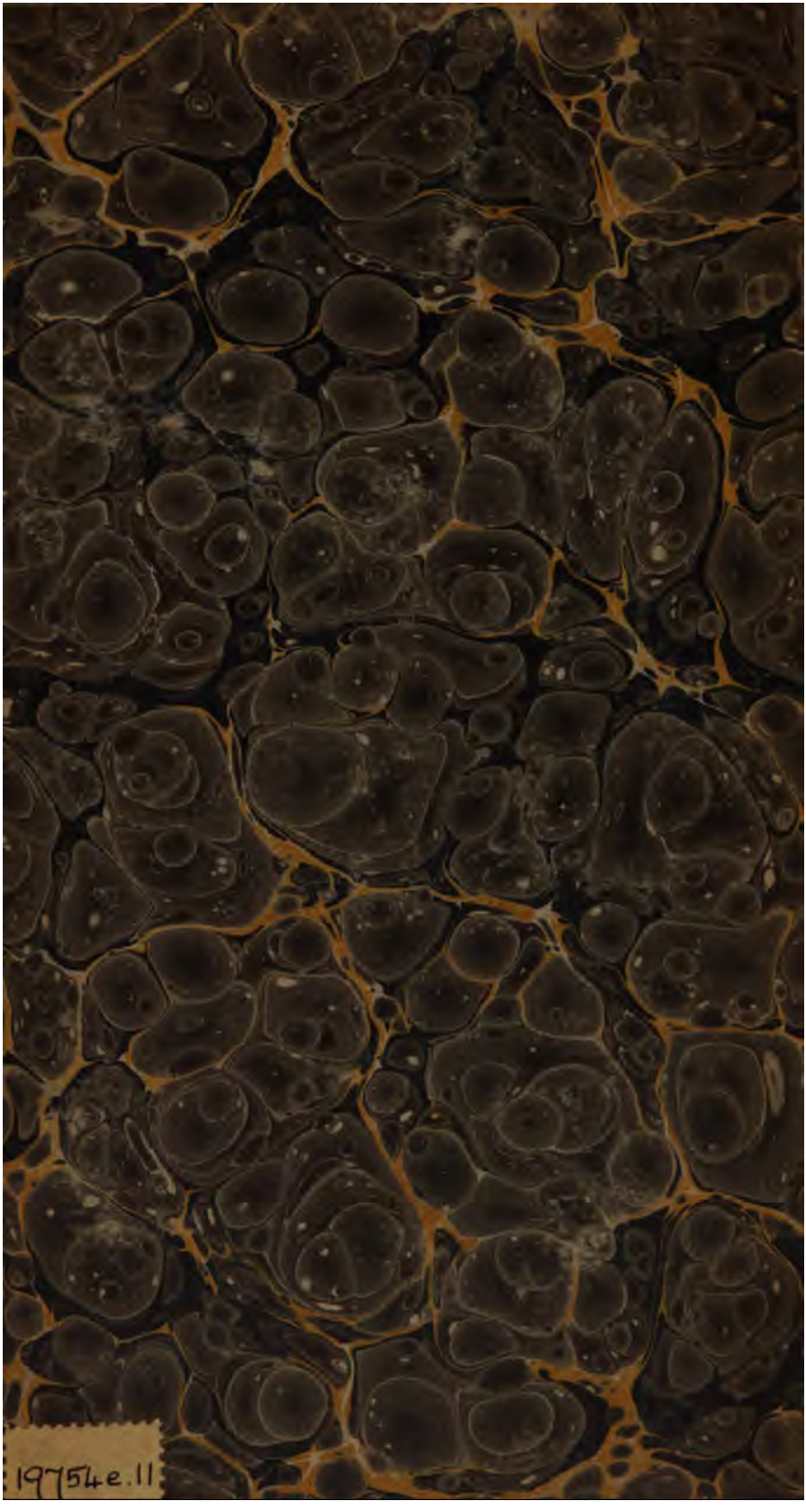
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Fig. 1.

Wreck of a Framed Cottage near S.
See Paragraph 21.

Fig. 2.

M.r Millar's House,
See (i) of the Plan, & Paragraph 13 & 21.

# Memoranda

OF THE

# BAHAMA TORNADO

OF

# 1850,

BY THE REV. WM. JNO. WOODCOCK,

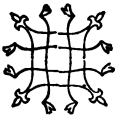
CURATE OF ST. AGNES, NASSAU;

AND

CAPTAIN R. J. NELSON,

ROYAL ENGINEERS.

WRITTEN FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SCHOOLS AT GRANTS-TOWN, AND BAINES-TOWN, NEW PROVIDENCE, BAHAMAS.



Melton-Mowbray:

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MESSRS. LONGMAN, BROWN, AND Co.,

PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

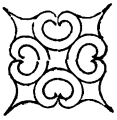
1850.

# PREFATORY NOTICE TO PART I.

IN committing these somewhat crude pages to the press, it seems necessary to explain why in this first part, so much of a personal character has been introduced. It was conceived that personal narrative, in such cases as that of which these pages treat, will generally possess the greatest amount of interest, for parties unacquainted with the characters and scenes affected; and as the amelioration of the case of the poor people who have suffered most by this awful visitation, through the medium of sound religious education, is the object to which any emolument arising from the sale of this pamphlet will be devoted, it was deemed not foreign to the subject in hand, to mention the Baines-town Day-Schools, whenever they come fairly within the range of the narrative. Moreover, I am not without hope, that the sympathy excited in behalf of the distress of our poor and ignorant population, may be proved and attested by aid towards the annual expenses of these Schools, in which 400 black children are daily taught the elements of a plain and religious education.

WM. JNO. WOODCOCK.

*Subscriptions will be received by William Latham, Esq., Melton-Mowbray, Leicestershire; or, the Rev. Thomas H. Howard, Wadsley Parsonage, near Sheffield.*



# Bahama Tornado.

THE season towards the close of March was unusually rough for the Bahamas. Such violent weather as Nassau is visited with, is commonly to be expected in the autumnal portion of the year, when the little vessels scarcely venture from their anchorage, but wait until the dreaded time of "the Hurricane months" is past. When therefore, Saturday the 30th of March, 1850, was ushered in with rain, and continued with storm, thunder, and lightning, and every indication of great electrical disturbance; although men crept under shelter, and shut their windows, no one apprehended any very unusual convulsion of the elements.

Yet it had been so decreed by Him who "maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind"; and the black-fringed clouds which hung like a curtain over the Island of New Providence, though regarded only as an evidence of a thunder storm, were in reality dark precursors of a desolation as gloomy and mysterious as themselves.

The sky grew blacker and blacker. The idlers in the streets gathered into the shops, the women who had gone to the Saturday's market, crowded for shelter under the market-

house, and few were the loiterers in the war of rain, thunder, and lightning, which ensued. Suddenly, there was a solemn stillness, a lull, after the roar of the conflicting elements. Rapid, short, and deafening claps of thunder, preceded by vivid flashes of forked light, occurred at intervals, as if the heavens were presaging some fearful judgment of Jehovah. At last, (about a quarter past one p.m.) a low roaring noise, somewhat resembling the rush of many wheels, arose towards the south-west of the town and suburbs of Nassau. In that direction lie the settlements of Grants-town and Baines-town, chiefly inhabited by Africans, and containing a population of about 2500 souls. The houses of these people are made either of wood, or of the young saplings (called wattles) of the native pine-tree, intertwined and consolidated with plaster, and are nearly all thatched with the leaves of the palmetto or fan-palm, which grows in great abundance throughout the Bahamas. Some few are built of the coarse limestone, of which these Islands consist.

At the South-western corner of these settlements the storm descended in the form of a Tornado, and proceeded with terrible velocity in a slightly curved line, to the north-east, its path rarely exceeding from 20 to 100 yards in width. Whatever stood in this line was destroyed or desolated, the fragile houses of the poor Africans were caught by the whirlwind, dashed to pieces, the fragments scattered over the Island, and into the sea; stone walls and more substantial dwellings were overturned and prostrated, and the sky seemed crowded, for the while, with flying beams, roofs, furniture, and clothes. The rotatory character of the Tornado, by whirling round and round these terrible missiles, increased the destruction, and diminished the power of resistance. In vain the lofty cocoa-nut palms stuck their roots into the rock; they were twisted assunder like a tender herb, and hurled upon the earth, monuments of the power of the unrestrained tempest. The fruit gardens—upon the produce of which the poor settlers of Grants-town and Baines-town so much depend—were utterly desolated, the avocado pears, the shaddocks, the oranges, lemons, limes, and sabadillos were stripped

by the whirling missiles of their very bark, if indeed, they remained at all; even the herbs were torn from the earth, to complete the ruin.

In the roof of the little chapel of St. Agnes, (which lay on the edge of the Tornado,) holes were made, and rafters were displaced by the flying splinters. One wing of a house, inhabited by Chief Justice Leas, was carried away by a sudden and irresistible shock, at a time too, when that gentleman and his lady usually occupied the portion destroyed. Providentially they were then in another part of the house, and received no personal injury. Some of the clothing from one of the ruined dwellings was found in the rigging of the brig Cora, lying at some distance in the harbour of Nassau. At last this fierce bolt of devastation reached the sea, cleaving the waters by its mighty agency, sinking two vessels near to its course, and whirling the angry waves into a large column of water. Thus it disappeared, like some evil angel of wrath, sent to carry through the land the word of judgment, who having executed his commission, returned obedient to the restraint of the all-wise and all merciful God.

I WAS sitting at home, utterly unconscious of such a scene of horror, aware only that the elements were convulsed, that the darkness was unusually great, that the thunder was loud and sudden, and the lightning vivid, when a messenger came up breathless from Grants-town, to tell me that my sexton's house was destroyed, and that the man

himself was killed in its ruins. While I bid the lad hasten for a medical man, lest perchance life might not be extinct, and was clothing myself to face the pelting storm, which now came down in torrents of rain, a piteous cry called me to the window, and I saw the half naked form of a poor African woman, wounded and streaming with blood, and tossing her arms in wild frenzy, while she called to me to come and help her. Had I not known her voice, I should not have recognized the sad object before me; but from this, I knew that it was the poor sexton's wife, whose death I had just learnt.

It was some time ere I could even partially soothe the terror and despair which overwhelmed the distressed sufferer; but, having at last prevailed upon her to take shelter, and administered such relief as was at hand, I hastened down the hill, to the valley of St. Agnes, wherein Grants-town and Baines-town lie. What a scene met the eye, as the path of the Tornado was approached. Ruined houses, broken furniture, torn-up trees, crowds of confused and agitated people, and all the while the storm pitilessly raining down, and deluging the roads with great pools of water. All were engaged too in looking after their own injuries, few knew any thing of the damage done to others. The road to the sexton's house was blocked up by fallen ruins, some of the boys of the day-school were dispatched to order the Baines-Town school-houses to be opened, considering that, as they were large rooms, and it had pleased God to spare them, they might be useful to receive the houseless, the wounded, and the dead. Ere the way could be forced to the sexton's house, (or rather the place where it had once stood) a messenger came with the tidings that he was quite dead; I therefore proceeded to the Day-Schools. These, placed in the settlement of Baines-town, were about 100 yards south of the Tornado, and by the mercy of God, had been left uninjured. The Infant School received numbers who fled thither for shelter from the storm; the Girls' School became a temporary hospital for the sick, and the Boys' School received the crushed body of the poor sexton.

The raging of the storm, the cries of the wounded, the

excited, and the terrified,—the hurrying to and fro,—the confused crowd of the houseless, the curious, and the benevolent,—and the bleeding forms of the dead, laid upon some rude stretcher, and borne aloft on the shoulders of their neighbours; such were the components of that wild and horrible scene, which must, without doubt, leave an indelible impression on the minds of those who witnessed it.

It was not until evening that the number of the dead was ascertained to be seven, and of the wounded nine; of the latter, one died in the Girls' School that night.

Such is a very condensed and brief summary of the chief points of this, to me, memorable event—the Nassau Tornado of 1850. To the scientific man, such an exposition of the extraordinary powers of the natural elements of this our earth, must afford many a curious subject for enquiry, and furnish many a hint for philosophical investigation. To the Christian it displays the Lord God of heaven, in his character as omnipotent, exercising and restraining the natural forces of this universe, according to His will.

They,—who in more temperate climes, live through their allotted term of years, without experiencing any such notable sign of Jehovah's power, who are accustomed to the obedience of nature to the mild restraint of her Lord, who have never witnessed her, when unbound by Him, displaying her resistless terrors,—may gather from the recital of these pages, how much they have to praise God for in the ordinary mercies of a quiet climate; where no volcano bursts forth — no earthquake destroys—no tornado desolates. We, who have been permitted to catch a glimpse of the Majesty of the Lord, and yet to live, are by this terrible voice, incited to increased watchfulness, and quickened zeal; we are instructed by the irresistible terrors of the Lord, and led to reflect on the enormity of sin—the traitor who first introduced wrath into this once fair dominion of the Most Holy.

As in a vision of the night too, we have had a faint representation given to us of that sudden and awful advent, when not this Island only, but earth itself shall start up and awake to the apprehension of Christ descending to judgment.

If, in this visitation, there was alarm, and despair, and quailing of heart among the careless, how much more then; if their risen Lord was to his believing people, a very present help in this their trouble, how much more in that day of doom, when they shall see Him descending in glory, to an expiring world, and communicating peace by the light of His reconciled countenance.

Are they not words of more than man's wisdom, which we are called in these latter days to consider, "Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he shall have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart." [a] And yet again, he says, for the consolation of the church of the faithful, "ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." [b]

## The Lone Widow.

LEWIS WOOD was an African, of the nation commonly known as Yoruba; a race of men who inhabit the western coast of Africa, stretching over a tract of country, extending from the sea coast on the north of the Bight of Benin, and east of Dahomey, to the western part of that lofty mountain chain, which seems almost to divide ancient from modern Africa, and is marked in our maps as Djebel Kumri, or the Mountains of the Moon. Liberated by some of our British Cruisers, when shipped from the coast of Guinea for the trans-

[a] Jeremiah xxx. 23, 24. [b] Ibid. 22.

atlantic slave market, this man was placed, with others of his countrymen, in like circumstances, in the settlement of Baines-town, where, by his industry and thrift, he supported the character of his tribe, and possessed at the time of the Tornado, a decent wooden house and flourishing garden, besides some money which he treasured up out of his earnings, for future use. He had married a young and respectable African woman, the companion of his captivity and service, and was blessed with three children, two little boys and a girl. George, the elder boy, (about eight years old,) had been admitted some months into the Baines-town boys' school, and it was this circumstance which made me acquainted with the family. Lewis, the younger, was in the infant school, and exhibited, as many of these African children do, a precocious aptitude for religious instruction. The father had, with praiseworthy energy, taught himself to read since his marriage, and was very anxious that his boy should be able to do the same.

On two occasions, when the master of the school visited Wood's house, he found him occupied in testing the boy's progress in reading, by a Bible which he possessed. The family were Wesleyan Methodists; and, although Wood had at one time been given to drinking, yet, latterly he had overcome this evil propensity, and was a reputable, and I trust, a religious man. His house was one of domestic happiness, beyond what is usual among his countrymen, and his wife and children were well clad, and well cared for.

But this pleasing picture was soon to be changed to one of surpassing sorrow. On the morning of the Tornado, Lewis Wood, with his three children, and a friend and fellow-countryman, were together in the house, sheltered as they thought from the storm. The father read the account of our Lord's crucifixion, to which (as the season of Easter) his children's attention had been directed. The wife was occupied in the kitchen, which, in this climate, is a detached edifice, and on applying for admission into the house, was advised by her husband, first to prepare the dinner. She had scarcely returned to the kitchen, when the Tornado came

rushing on. The house was broken into a thousand pieces, and hurled into the air with all its inmates. They were frightfully mutilated, and killed, probably instantaneously. Their bodies were found many yards from the house,—the head of poor Lewis Wood crushed and severed from his body. I am told (and I love to think it true) that little George had a Bible in his hand, and so was found dead, grasping the charter of immortality; and thus, by a mute sermon, this babe perfected praise, and "being dead, yet speaketh."[a] They laid them together, those five, thus united in the bands of death, to sleep in dust, until the morning of the resurrection.

But what became of the mother? The fragile building in which she was, was cast away, and she beheld with her eyes, as a wife and mother, the awful devastation of her house, and all she loved on earth. Yes, she saw them all, home, husband, children, crushed and scattered to the winds. And she stood, on the evening of that awful day—who in the morning had rejoiced as a wife, and a mother—alone in the world, houseless and utterly bereaved.

It was while in search of another sufferer, to administer the consolations which the religion of Christ affords, that I found myself, on the morning after the Tornado, (what a sad Easter-day it was!) in the presence of widowed and childless Mary Wood. Simple-minded African as she was, the intensity of her grief threw a dignity around her, and I felt that the majesty of her sorrow ought not to be too closely approached. At first she seemed stupified with the blow she had received, but at last she burst forth into an agony of tears. "Father," she said, lifting up her hands and streaming eyes, "was it for my sin or theirs, Thou hast taken them away." For my part, sympathy with this poor lone one's distress, overcame me, I could only kneel down and pray with them all, that God the Comforter, would bind up the wounded heart, and dry those bitter tears of anguish, which man's consolation could not stay.

I went a short distance further on the rocky path by which the cottage stood, and on returning, found the inmates coming

[a] Heb. xi. 4.

out. Mary Wood followed them listlessly, as if she knew not what she was doing. But she had scarcely crossed the threshold, when she uttered a piteous cry which went to my heart, and stooping, picked up a little torn frock which lay among some of the collected fragments of the late ruin. *It was the dress of one of her lost children.*

O, ye who know what a mother's love is, picture to yourselves, for I cannot describe, the wretchedness expressed by the groans and cries of this afflicted woman. Light was Jacob's bereavement, and his agony at the sight of Joseph's bloody coat, when compared to her's, for he had many children left to love, but here every cord of affection was snapped, and the heart left to drift alone down the stream of time.

Touching indeed was it to witness this poor Child of Sorrow, with all a mother's craving, coming day after day to the Infant School, in Baines-town, where her children had been accustomed to attend! There she would sit, and gaze, and weep, seeming to find companionship in the little crowd, whose young voices had but just now blended with her own lost ones in the hymn of praise, or the Word of Truth; as if the spirit of her sleeping babes lingered among the scenes where, while on earth, they had been directed to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who "carries the lambs in his arms."

Ye, who are nursed in luxury, or surrounded by relations and friends, yet make great troubles out of light cares, consider the case of this poor woman; know that though bowed down to the earth with sorrow, she was still patient and submissive to the chastening of God, and let the greatness of her affliction, expose to you the lightness of your own.

## The Old Blind Man.

How James C—— lost his eyesight some twenty years ago, is not known. If you believe him, it was caused by a potion given to him by a dealer in the dark mysteries

of Obi, a superstitious method by which too many of our Africans yet endeavour to account for any thing whose origin they cannot clearly understand. Much in the same way as, in the days of King James, our British ancestors saved themselves the trouble of investigating the cause of diseases and accidents, by attributing them all to the influence of witchcraft.

It is enough however for our purpose, that old James had been long blind, His aged wife too, had her eyesight but very imperfectly, yet sufficiently to be a guide and helpmate to her afflicted spouse. James was a member of the Church of England, his wife was a Baptist; and while she went to her chapel, the old blind man was led by a friend to the neighbouring church.

On the day of the Tornado, his wife was standing by his side, giving him his dinner. She handed him something to drink, which he found too hot, and asked her to cool it for him. He had scarcely spoken, ere a sound as of crashing beams and timbers was heard, and he felt himself violently cast upon the ground, a great rafter falling upon his side, which, while it buried him, protected him from the havoc of the missiles.

It was some little time ere he was relieved from this painful situation, and then he learnt with horror the fate of his poor wife: she had been dashed to pieces and killed by the falling ruins, and lay upon the ground a corpse. Thus, poor old James was deprived, in a moment, of house, property, the helpmate of his feeble age, and was compelled to apply to public charity, to support his declining years, and meet the necessities of poverty, affliction, blindness, and old age.

Is not this man a Child of Sorrow?

## Mercies.

MANY are the tales of woe which the survivors in this scene of havoc are able to relate, and many a page might be filled with pictures of distress. But we will turn from these lessons on the vanity of things earthly, to the remembrance of some of God's Providential mercies, and while we tremble at the terrors of His majesty, we will also glorify His love. A poor woman, with her children, was seated in her little hut, when suddenly her habitation was taken and launched into the air, leaving the terrified group exposed to the violence of the weather. The plaster from the walls alone, fell upon them in a great heap, wounding and bruising some of the children. When the mother looked around her, her infant (only a few days old) was no where visible. It had been snatched from her hands by the whirlwind, and buried in the crumbling mass of rubbish. Anxiously she sought it, trembling lest her natural fears should be found realised. But He "who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," was better to the poor mother than all her fears, and the babe was found in the midst of the ruin alive, uninjured, and *asleep!* Thus, while the fury of the storm mocked the strength of man, and his handiwork, it pleased Jehovah to protect the feeble and helpless, that the excellency of the power might be seen to be of God.

"Another remarkable instance of this Fatherly care of God over the helpless, is to be found in the family of J. B. The children were all at home by themselves, their father was at his usual employment; their mother was at the market. A girl, three young boys, and an infant occupied the house. The Tornado came rushing on, tore up a little piazza in front of the house, and removed the wooden dwelling itself, from the place where it had stood, to a distance of about twelve yards, dashing to pieces, by its weight, a kitchen and outhouses, and part of a wall. All this while, the poor children, thrown into a corner of their dwelling, trembling with terror, remained unhurt, although the gay earthenware, which

used to deck the house, was broken into innumerable fragments, and lay on the ground, to tell the helpless children from what tremendous forces God had preserved them. And this mercy was the more conspicuous from the fact, that the house of poor Lewis Wood, in which he and his children were destroyed, stood close by Barton's.

With what anxious and earnest gaze did the mother look down that day into the valley of St. Agnes, as she returned from the market to her home! Who shall say what her emotions were, when she traced the line of desolation, and beheld her own dwelling in the very midst of its path, overthrown and ruined? With what an agony of fear did she speed to search for her children, and with what joyful gratitude did she lift her streaming eyes to God our Father, to praise and bless Him for His providential care, when she found them alive, and uninjured. "Have you lost much"? said I to her, soon after. "I mind nothing I lost, so long as God has spared the children," was her answer, and she sealed the truth of it by a mother's tear. [a]

## Conclusion.

We are taught in the Gospel, that those on whom the tower in Siloam fell, were not sinners above the rest of the dwellers in Jerusalem, and that God's judgments on particular persons are intended as calls to repentance to the rest of mankind. Here then, while in the words of the Psalmist, we cry "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath wrought upon the earth;" we join with that voice, crying in

[a] I was witness to this—and shall never forget the simple, unaffected, earnest expression of this good creature.—R. J. N.

the wilderness, "prepare ye the way of the Lord," in exhorting men to repent. You, who in distant climes, have escaped these fierce throes of sin-diseased nature—remember that a day is coming, when no country or nation shall be exempt from the whirlwind of Jehovah's wrath! Woe be to them, who, in that day, have no "refuge from the storm, or shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones shall be as a storm against the wall"! and joy to those who sheltered by Jesus—the Rock of Ages—shall meet God in that day with peace; who, resting in Christ, shall be safe and unhurt amidst the ruins of a world! And, as in this Tornado, one was taken and another left,—so shall it be in the Day of Doom.

Neighbours, countrymen, families, shall be divided; some through faith, to enter into rest; others through carelessness or unbelief, to taste the bitter pains of eternal death. And if thou, O reader, hast never seriously considered whether thine own hopes of salvation, in that Tempest of Wrath, are firmly settled on Jesus Christ, the tried corner stone, let this poor narrative of a great display of the Lord's omnipotence, lead thee this day to self-examination, and prayer for the Spirit's influence. Let it teach thee to be watchful, for it displays the suddenness of God's calls;—let it lead thee to dread sin, which having introduced such judgments into the world, will, if unrepented of, bring thee to eternal misery;—let it lead thee from earth to heaven, from a carnal to a spiritual life, from the service of Satan, to the obedience of Christ. In conclusion, let the faint image of God's power, and man's nothingness, which these pages display, lead thee to see the instability of all that earth can give, and to "count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge that is in Christ Jesus the Lord."

W. J. W.

PART II.

# MEMORANDA

BY

CAPTAIN NELSON, R.E.

# BAHAMA TORNADO.

PART II.

PERSONS who are accustomed only to the investigation of subjects more or less under control, to which their attention is exclusively devoted in a convenient and well-appointed observatory, suitably placed with regard to the objects of enquiry—will perhaps think it strange that so very little meteorological detail is offered in the following few paragraphs, respecting the recent (and happily somewhat rare) occurrence of the Tornado; which, in this instance, raged for a few minutes, with a violence unknown even to those who have been for thirty-five years generally resident in the West Indies.

2. With reference to accounts rendered of current and scientific matters, the surprise would be warranted, were they laid before the public incomplete in any of their appliances and appurtenances of correlative notices, censure would be deserved: but, when the Tornado, Thunderbolt, &c., are the occurrences in question, at a station where no observatory exists, (and where it would be a cause of regret if there were one, unless in every way as complete as it should be with instruments)—it is well that we have even the common registry of common place instruments, and the accounts of hurried and imperfect observation. Such is given in this

short tale, written with no other attention to system than that of following a Reporter over this "Field of Dismal Things," in the course of his annotations and reflections, in a very plain way indeed.

3. At about 1½, p.m., 30th March, I was busily engaged on professional matters, and reading a letter written in the usual full clear hand of an official document, when it very rapidly grew so dark that the paper could no longer be read without straining the eyes; it was nearly dusk as in the south of England, at four p.m., of a winter's day. Immediately before and after this, we had those violent rains, commonly known as "Downright Tropicals," thunder and lightning, loud, vivid, and frequent. The wind which just before had been N. E., had shifted very suddenly to S. W. The darkness cleared off however very rapidly, but the whole, though rather extreme, presented no very great novelty to any one accustomed to hot climates.

4. Soon after, it was reported that a Tornado had done great mischief in the neighbouring settlements (about a mile from the R. E. office) of Grants-town and Baines-town. On proceeding thither, still in heavy rain and gusty weather, the statement proved to be but too true; the general character of the scene of distress would be difficult to describe, except by one of the scriptural passages, in which displays of Divine Wrath are foretold; * and nothing was more striking than in the sober (but alas!—passing) effect on the demeanour of the very generally profligate race inhabiting the valley, engendered under that accursed system of Slavery which scouts the sanctity of the marriage vow, and pairs off males and females with the same object and purpose as the owners of cattle. For the moment, these poor people were frightened into sobriety and external decency:—yet, even then, were heard such expressions among them as—"see God's wrath upon those wicked people of Grants-town and Baines-town!" and that too from men and women involved to the full in equal depths of debauchery,—to say nothing of the superadded and negative hypocrisy of self-deception.

* Especially such as those relative to Nineveh. See Nahum i. 3. 7.

5. The personal distress evinced by weeping and wailing—by the pained and hurried look of desolation "gathering darkness on all faces" of those who were seen passing to and fro with the wrecks of all that might be saved at the moment's notice, from their prostrate cottages, heedless of the drenching rain that partly flooded the road, still seeking one another, or "bewildering," (not pondering,) where they might find a night's shelter;— by the confusion on the road, strewed over and more or less blocked up amid the pools of water, with masses of palmetto-thatch, fragments of shingled-roof,[a] pieces of boarding and framing from the walls of their frail tenements,—fronts of the cocoa-nut palm, and here and there a trunk of the same—stones from the levelled side, and house walls,—all this distress of mind, and ruin of substance alike broadly displayed on the main road where the whirlwind had crossed it, was but a full and fair sample of what had occurred at every step of the Destroying Angel, commissioned to make this display of God's terrors:—and if these—as they must needs be—are but trivial to what WE SHALL SEE, when the Almighty "rises to shake terribly the earth," our wisdom is very plain, to "embrace the Son,"—aye, and his offers, "lest he be angry:—if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him!" And what a fearful doom for those who, having neglected these his offers, overtures, and *entreaties*, will then instinctively fly from his presence as the "tribes of the earth, that *mourn* at the coming of the Son of Man."

6. Very many, not involved in this distress, were at their post. Every class seemed fairly represented,—the Surgeon, the Minister, the Governor, the Soldier, the Member of Council, the Member of the House of Assembly, &c., all were active, first in rescuing the survivors from the fallen houses, and then in carrying the wounded and dying, for the afternoon and night, to Mr. Woodcock's schools, (see plan accompanying) from whence the Commandant had them removed by the Garrison spring-cart, and fatigue parties, to the African

[a] Shingles are slips of wood, shaped like, and substituted for slates and tiles, where these cannot be advantageously obtained.

Hospital, opened to them and the houseless, by the prompt orders of His Excellency the Governor; and here we must leave the poor sufferers, to give what little we can respecting the Tornado.

8. It seems to have been first noticed at Andros Island, the nearest to the westward of New Providence, but only as a heavy gale. We next hear of it at, or somewhat to the eastward of, South-West Bay, where one Edden, a Negro, reports its rapid approach to something between mist and steam. In the same quarter also, it is stated that two clouds, *each bearing a rainbow*, met, and it is presumed, discharged. The whole morning, from ten o'clock, had shewn great signs of electrical disturbance there. Three waterspouts were seen from the south-west of the island, one (to the westward) very dark, the other two of a livid appearance. Waterspouts, it may be remarked, are said not to be uncommon at this time of the year, and are usually considered to precede the rainy season.

9. Having struck the south-west coast, as above-mentioned, it proceeded about north-east through the Pine-Barrens, towards Nassau, passing about two miles to the westward of the African village of Carmichael; at the point where it crossed the road to the other African settlements of Adelaide, nearly forty large pine-trees, blown down, were counted; some with their roots in the air, the rest prostrate, and lying in the general direction of the whirlwind's tract, which was here about one hundred yards wide. We have no further account until it approached Nassau, where it told its own tale fearfully from the point A., where it *came down* on its way over the low hills above the town to B., very near the point where the Tornado of 1825 also ended.—*(See paragraph 22.)*

10. The expression "came down" is advisedly used; from the abrupt commencement of the last portion of the line of havoc:—at A. there is a certain loose stone wall running north and south, which, with the trees and brushwood close to it, have suffered no damage. Twenty yards to the eastward of this, a like and parallel wall is thrown down, and a fine old Pride-of-India-Tree, hollow from age, crushed and

demolished. From thence, still proceding about north-east, it first destroyed the cottage of Atkin Butler, (near A.) carrying some of the splinters a quarter of a mile away to the northward; and from the general report of the whirling in the air of fragments of all sizes, from the beam (nay roof) of a house, to the leaf of a tree. From the different and *opposite* [a] direction into which certain houses were thrown,—from the singular destruction of larger dwellings, whose outhouses, between them and A., remained uninjured—it appears to have had a double motion, first *ricochet*, and secondly *rotatory*:—the former, frequently observable in its first bound, when a squall *descends* on smooth water; the latter being that from whence the term 'whirlwind' is derived.

11. The Schools (*p.*) and the little Chapel of St. Agnes, (*l.*) in which the moral and secular education of more than 400 black and coloured children is carried on, were mercifully spared:—there is a class who will sneer at this assertion, and such choice spirits are referred to the Formula $\frac{\infty}{\infty - \frac{1}{\infty}} = \infty$ for their edification; but there is also, I trust, a more numerous body, who from the Monarch to the Peasant, have more accurate notions of the INFINITY of "Him with whom they have to do," and who take pleasure in recognizing the same hand that "caused it to rain upon this piece of ground, and not upon that," as actively present in setting bounds to the agency of His Minister of Wrath. Our little chapel was on the verge of the current, a beam flying in the air, was forced through the shingled roof, breaking the shingle-boarding and two rafters; also, a pinnacle of its tiny cupola was carried away; and at no point of the line was the action more severe than at (*d.*,) immediately in front of, and to the westward of St. Agnes.—"So far shalt thou go, and no further."

12. The breadth of the *immediate* current, as traced by the ruins, varied from 120 to 40 yards, expanding, contract-

[a] (e. g.) Jupiter Barton's house (*q.*) was lifted for its whole length southward; that of Briton Oneas (*r.*) in like manner northward; but there was every intermediate 'bearing' where the cottages were moved without being knocked to shatters.

ing, turning, whirling, and vaulting in the most anomalous[a] manner conceivable. Yet, with exception of the instances above mentioned, 'wheat and tares' seem alike uprooted along the path prescribed. Worthy, industrious men, like Scipio Moncur, Jupiter Barton, and Aaron Cambridge, fared hardly better than the most worthless, though their losses will be made good by that sympathy and respect for their character, which will not leave them neglected. A lady who had observed the scene from the hills above, describing its course amid the cottages in Grants-town and Baines-town, says that "these cottages fell with no more apparent resistance than so many children's card houses." Without having been aware of this at the time, the impression made on my own mind, on first seeing the havoc done, was precisely and literally the same.

13. Having quitted the valley, and ascended the low hill, on which stands the Circular Redoubt (*b.*) Fort Fincastle, breaking long gaps in the fences of the gardens chiefly occupying this space, it burst furiously on the dwelling of Chief Justice Lees (*e.*); having turned more to the north as it thus crossed the hills, the whirling column became oblique, the foot being in advance, and here a quick movement up and down was observed. As to Mr. Lees' residence, it demolished the western wing, and some adjacent outhouses, and seriously injured the main roof; it dealt in like fashion with Mr. Fulford's large framed house, *once* standing at (*h.*); the roof was taken of bodily, and carried for about one-third of the way

[a] "Anomalous,"—this of course is only in the popular sense; at first the action seemed explicable by the diagrams, page 76, (Ed. 1.) of Sir Snow Harris, on Thunderstorms, considered as applied to sundry points of attraction, not in a plane, but as determining a very irregular solid form. But, *Rotation* in a horizontal sense, and *Ricochet* produced by the up and down motion (paragraph 13 and 23.) in a vertical plane, whilst advancing—both eminently electric in character—explain nearly every thing; if the above-mentioned diagrams are wanted, it is to account for general change of direction, as from *h* to B;—though, for this, be it observed, it selected rather an empty space, than one well occupied by attractive matter.

across the harbour, from whence it was driven to sea, having been at first supposed to have been a ship capsized. From this point, (*h.*) across the north-east of the town of Nassau, it seems neither to have left a stone, nor a tree, however large, unturned, where damage was to be done. Mr. Miller's house (*i.*) of stone, just built, was nearly all thrown down; and from thence grazing the corner (*j.*) of Finlayson's ship-yard, in characteristic termination of its demoniacal course [a] in misty vapour, as also thus seen at South-west Bay, it sunk two small vessels at anchor in the harbour; and thus concluded an amount of damage in life, limb, and property, which may be approximately stated at eight killed, (all between A. and *l.* of the plan,) twenty more or less wounded, from the broken limb to the severe contusion,—and between £4000 and £5000 worth of property; no great sum in a large city, but a grievous affair when perhaps 100 of the 150 sufferers are the liberated Africans and coloured people occupying the cottages and little plots of garden ground in the districts of Grants-town and Baines-town.—*(See E. of the Plan.)*

14. I append a Memorandum, kindly supplied by Mr. Burnsides, A.D.C., to His Excellency, of what occured under his own observation, and to himself. The spot to which he alludes, as "opposite the Herald Office," is marked (*t.*) 300

[a] It is not easy to avoid the Bathos when every day things, or even scientific terms and personal feeling, given in a popular way, have to be mixed with scriptural expressions:—but I cannot help referring at this point of last and desperate mischief, to the malignity of the ejected demon, that having rent his victim, departeth from him, leaving him "wallowing and foaming." I am not a Clergyman, but I have the same interests at stake, though not the same profession; and thus, and as a man much nearer fifty than forty years of age, I may be allowed to observe that such terrible scenes as these, supply something more than pictorial illustrations of such truths and denunciations as those given in the opening chapter of Nahum respecting Nineveh. Isaiah xxvi. 9. Jeremiah xxii. 23. Psalm lxxviii. 34. Hosea v. 15., &c., &c. They are very palpable 'hand writings on the wall'; and such dark visitations render their reading all the easier. Some points are rendered more visible by the flash of the lightning, others stand out in more terrible contrast from the very gloom and darkness of desolation.

yards northward of the main current, and hence well out of its fiercest onslaught.

15. From what I have heard from two different quarters respecting a sulphureous smell, from what Mr. Burnsides states, (confirmed as to the luminous appearance by another observer in a different place), and from all that I have ever seen or heard, I feel convinced that the theory of air rushing into a more or less rarified space, will never account for either hurricane, tornado, waterspout, or simoon, (the three last being nearly indentical,) though it may, *to a certain extent*, for the trade and other winds of a more ordinary character. I can only refer the said "hurricane, tornado, waterspout,[a] or simoon," to electric agency, from its peculiar action, as well as its excessive and irresistible impetuosity. We know the plaything 'model' wind that can be produced by the feeble current of a very common electrifying machine; and without any demand on the imagination, we can conceive a stream of electricity, in a peculiar condition, other than that in which it manifests itself as lightning, endeavouring to force its way with such urgeny that the smitten and condensed air actually becomes, for the time a firm and buoyant body, from its "Specific Rate of Motion" having been vastly exceeded.

16. As Babbage observes, there is a *time* necessary for perfect action in every case; and every one knows how severe the re-actionary blow is that he receives from striking water too sharply to admit of its yielding immediately; the "specific rate of motion"[b] for its particles has been passed, it cannot move, and for the moment, is a hard body.

[a] Waterspouts.—For an unusually interesting account of a group of these, by Mr. Mc Murray, see Report of British and Foreign Bible Society, 1849, Ps. cxlvii. The harbour of Nassau, is only half-a-mile wide; had it been wider, we should have had a complete Waterspout, judging from the account of its commencement by persons at (*j*.) The Tornado, the Waterspout, and Simoon of the *Sandy* desert are only different manifestations of the same agency.

[b] There is an important principle in these words, if duly evolved:—the immaterial "Mind" is not directly subject to this law; but, it is very much so through the medium of its material apparatus—the Nervous System—including the brain itself. Where the organization of this

17. Apply the same idea to air: consider how soon and effectually the velocity of the fiercest projectile is reduced by its resistance; and we can obtain, perhaps, a clue to the secondry or tertiary cause of the mischief of violent agencies, checked and thwarted by the resistance of a mere gaseous fluid, that is 'driven to desperation and extremities' from its sheer inability to escape.

18. Early in October last, we had the latest display of lightning; on this occasion I counted seventy flashes (not mere 'summer lightning') in two minutes! From that time to the Tornado, arrears seem to have accumulated,—they have been discharged with terrible usury. The winter, on the whole, had been very mild and fine, the thermometer not having sunk below 62°.

system is complete, and the health is good, a very large portion of its imperfect results, (or inaccurate thoughts) is caused by its "Specific Rate of Action" having been exceeded. The passage, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," as well as certain proverbs in common use, are written with a very clear apprehension of the mischief of *excitement*, in disturbing the proper logical order of thought, (probably, in the first instance, by its notorious action on memory, and even direct observation, producing also the plague of a vicious parenthetic style of writing, like the above, when disorderly vagrant thoughts crowd in too late with most inopportune importunity, regardless of Sir E. B. Lytton's important canon,—"Even Virtues, out of Time and Place, cease to be Virtues."—With only one mail in the month to England, we are writing against time, and so have no leisure to rip-up and re-arrange our paragraphs,) and occasioning thereby, error and all its many thousand-headed mischiefs. Such excitement, and all its disturbances, are ever created by anger, with or without just cause; or from whatever cause—especially any unwelcome check on the gratification of the "desires of the flesh and the mind,"—and quite as much by their unbridled indulgences: but this opens many chapters of highest import,—there is only room to observe, briefly, that the Brain, like any other machine, requires *a time* for perfect action, peculiar to every individual; and that too, subject to various modifications by ill-health, and other circumstances. Some will see things quicker than others, but NEARLY ALL will acquit themselves at least respectably, if not over-hurried; and this too, goes far to make what are considered 'different degrees of natural ability,' but are in reality, very generally, mere questions of 'Specific Time of Action.'

19. From a register kept with care, by Chief Justice Lees, for seven years, taken three times a day, viz., at nine a.m., three p.m., and nine p.m.

The average of the Thermometer, at Nassau, is 77½
The average of the Barometer, is . . 30.06

The Garrison Register, on the 30th ult., stood as follows :—

| | Barometer. | | Thermometer. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9. a.m. | 29.87 | — | 77 |
| 12. — | 29.80 | — | 76 |
| 3. p. m. | 29.78 | — | 76 |

My own Aneroid Barometer gave 29.1, at three p.m.; but on such occasions, a single-handed officer has quite enough to do with reference to his official charge of barracks and stores—the care of his own house and family—besides the actual examination, at the earliest possible opportunity, of mischief done.

20. Not knowing at the moment, whether it was a hurricane or not, the possible return of the attack was a cause of anxiety; as it proved to be no hurricane this did not occur, but between two and three p.m., a strong gale set in from the south, so violent, that when on the hill, near Government-House, I found it very difficult to stand; walking straight was out of the question in a wind that broke down one of the Governor's lightning conductors, not long after I had passed, and which overturned one of the sentinels in his box at the eastern gate. This, however was a plain direct wind, and it had none of the interests detailed by Redfield, Reid, and others, who have done so much in illustration of these matters.

21. Two meagre but characteristic[a] sketches are given of some houses not *quite* thrown down; it is however, difficult, where the original status of the subject is unknown to the reader, to give such things their proper and truly forlorn appearance. If at all faithful, or drawn with spirit, they will be sure to have so much of the "Sultan Mahmoud" interest, as will go far to defeat the object of the narrative; and really,

[a] The palm-tree in Fig. 1, has been 'dragged' a few yards out of its place, to give the character better than if omitted, for the sake of literal accuracy. It was a fine young tree which, not long before, I had noted for a study.

so complete has been the devastation, that any one conversant with such materials as palmetto-thatch, shingle roofs, wattle and plaster hovels, framed houses, loose stone walls, palm trees, palmettoes, bananos, plantains, avocadoes, shaddocks, oranges, limes, lemons, &c., &c., as the poor wrecks covering the Tornado's track, may just as well make their own compositions at home; I defy them to cariacature the subject.

## TORNADO OF 1825.

22.

REFERENCE was made in paragraph 9, to the Tornado of 1825. I am informed as follows, by a very intelligent observer, Mr. Fowler, who lived nearly opposite the point (*u*) in the plan, at the time.

23. At about 1½ p.m.,[a] 5th October, 1825, after a sultry forenoon, Mr. Fowler observed a dark cloud advancing rapidly from the south-east, like a large and heavy squall, but not then determined as rain. It had a peculiar and rather quick motion up and down—say ten times at least in a minute—between earth and sky, in addition to its direct mode of progression. On arriving at (*u*), a black cloud from the west, moved to meet it, and from the moment of impact, heavy rain, thunder, lightning, rotation, a heavy rumbling sound, change of direction, (northward) and mischief ensued. Much damage was done in its short but energetic course, which ended in uncovering a new store-house, at least sixty feet long, and carrying the roof bodily into the sea, to be seen no more. There was a heavy gale on the same day at Andros Island, to the westward, and Abaco to the northward.

[a] This is about the same hour as in the late whirlwind;—possibly, in both cases, regulated in some degree by the maximum temperature of the day.

*P.S. On having concluded my own share of this pamphlet, I have been requested by Mr. Woodcock, to read his; and on so doing, perceive several almost literal coincidences, which must be considered as so much good evidence, from the perfect independence with which each of us completed his own contribution.*

AND now—"Gentles our tale is said."

We hazard our M.S. to the mercy of the Printer and Publisher, as regards correction of the press and execution of the drawings; we leave the performance itself before the Reader, calling for judgment on the plea of 'intention' only.

The Title Page announces that the profits are for the benefit of the Schools (see *p.* in plan) of Grants-town and Baines-town, instituted, and chiefly maintained, by the present Curate of St. Agnes; and I may say more freely than my colleague in this pamphlet, that they really deserve every assistance and encouragement that can be given. As stated in the text, more than 400 black and coloured children receive such education as can be afforded in the Boys' School, Girls' School, Infant School, and Sunday School, in the hope of benefiting, chiefly, the rising race, by the gradual introduction of a well-formed, and desirable leaven of christian principles into the community in general, producing the result of a *Godly character, and a manly intelligent bearing*, such as slavery never can produce; and of which, little can be expected long after its extinction, from the *habits* it transmits for some generations, if not carefully counteracted.

The elder race may have been, nay are, in some occasional instances, reclaimed; but it is, as usual, to the *children* that, under God, one looks with by far the greater hope; the new wine fares best in the new bottles. Notwithstanding all that has been affected—and a few English friends have indeed been lately very liberal—yet *much* remains to be done, in securing, humanly speaking, the fair prospect of stability, and endurance beyond what may be expected from the frail state of my dear friend's health. Let the Reader kindly give what extension he can to the distribution of this brochure, and remember that all sums will be gladly received by W. LATHAM, Esq., Melton-Mowbray, Leicestershire; and Rev. T. H. HOWARD, Wadsley, Sheffield, Yorkshire, on account of the Schools of Grants-town and Baines-town.

R. J. N.

## Letter from Mr. Burnside, A.D.C.

19*th April* 1850.

*My Dear Sir,*

*As you have requested me to give an account of what I saw of the movements of the Tornado, I shall endeavour to do so, but the awfulness of the scene, deprived me at the time of any other thought or care than that of the safety of those at home.*

*During the morning, and until a few minutes of the commencement of the Tornado, I was at Government House. On coming out of the Eastern door, en route homewards, I looked towards the* S.W., *when Grants-town appeared to be enveloped in a cloud, like the heavy fog that hangs over it of a winter's morning, but of a very dark blue, approaching to black. My step was accelerated by its appearance, and when opposite the Herald Office, I heard a noise in the air, like the letting-off of steam; at the same time to my horror, I saw fragments of houses, trees, &c., whirling in the air, and moving very rapidly in a* N.E. *direction. After the body of whirling cloud had passed to the eastward of me, I could distinctly observe that the lower part extended down to the earth, and was tinged with a light flame colour, while the upper part retained its original murky appearance.*

*The rotatory body, I think, was confined to a diameter of from* 40 *to* 50 *yards, but a mass of dense cloud accompanied it It was followed by a heavy fall of rain.*

*Believe me to be,*
*My Dear Sir,*
*Very truly yours,*
S. B. BURNSIDE.

*Capt. Nelson, R.E.*

JOHN DAY, PRINTER, MELTON.